

## **Money to provide City Hall retrofitting, city traffic, security cameras**

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When Congress approved this year's Homeland Security spending, a piece of the pie was set aside for Elk Grove.

The 2009-10 federal Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, signed in late October, included a \$750,000 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) earmark for an emergency operations center in Elk Grove.

The center would be a communications hub used by various agencies to coordinate the response to a large-scale disaster.

Rep. Dan Lungren (R-Gold River), who sits on the House Committee on Homeland Security and represents Elk Grove in Congress, said the funding helps address a federal concern and a local interest.

"There's been a problem with respect to coordinating operations (when responding to a disaster)," Lungren said in a Nov. 13 phone interview. "Part of that difficulty in coordinating operations in a regional area was a lack of communications capability."

The operations center will be housed in Elk Grove's City Council Chambers, and will only be used when the emergency procedures are authorized by the city manager, Elk Grove city spokesperson Angela Frost said.

The \$750,000 will pay for renovations to the chambers like an emergency generator, electrical and data ports, fiber optic cables and conduit, Frost said.

The funding will also provide for video cameras that would provide views of traffic at major intersections and roadways leading into and out of the city to relieve traffic congestion as well as "locations determined to be 'sensitive' for the purposes of Homeland Security," according to a January Elk Grove staff report spelling out the city's request for the funding.

Elk Grove Police Capt. Bob Risedorph said the cameras won't necessarily be on city government properties.

"At this time I cannot tell you how many or where they would be other than they are intended to be critical traffic routes throughout the city and critical infrastructure or significant locations in the city," Risedorph said in an e-mail. "The numbers and locations are yet to be determined."

Frost didn't know when construction would start or if the regular meetings held in the chambers would be disrupted, but expected the Elk Grove City Council to begin the process of finding a contractor in January or February.

Brian Kaveney, a spokesperson for Lungren, said he wasn't sure when the money would actually be transferred to Elk Grove.

"Once (the appropriations bill) passed, it (was) out of our hands and in the administration's hands," Kaveney said.

If Elk Grove's city manager declares a local emergency and allows the center to be used, city employees will assume 31 different roles organized in departments of: management, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics and finance/administration.

Outside agencies such as the city and county of Sacramento, and the California and U.S. Departments of Homeland Security could also be called on to use the center, Frost said.

In a statement issued by the city, Elk Grove Mayor Pat Hume said the center has been a priority for the Elk Grove City Council.

"It will be a tremendous asset to have in the south Sacramento region in the case of a natural or man-made disaster," Hume said in the statement.

The center will be the only one of its kind in south Sacramento County.

The city council discussed a desire for federal funding for an emergency operations center as early as 2005, city records show.

The city's original request for funding was \$987,000. Funding was approved for dozens of other similar centers around the country as part of the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, including centers in Detroit, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, San Francisco and Scottsdale, Ariz.

In all, \$60 million will go to emergency operations centers around the country - almost double the 2008-09 funding of \$34 million.

